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Address to Parents and
Teachers, by V. Ward

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AN
HUMBLE
Assistant to Parents and Teachers,
ESPECIALLY TO THE
TEACHERS IN SABBATH SCHOOLS,
CONTAINING
A SHORT ADDRESS on the Importance and best Method
OF TEACHING RELIGION to YOUTH.
AND ALSO,
SIXTY-THREE SUBJECTS TO BE PROVED FROM SCRIPTURE,
METHODICALLY ARRANGED.

By VALENTINE WARD.

THUS saith the Lord to parents,* *These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* And again,† *Train up a child in the way in which he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* And in the epistle to the Ephesians, vi. 4. *Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

After these distinct mandates, from the court of heaven, on the subject of religious instruction, there can be no difference of opinion, amongst the genuine servants of the Lord, as to the duty itself; however, they may

* Deut. vi. 6, 7.

† Proverbs.

differ respecting the best mode of discharging it. They may freely exercise their own judgment, as it regards the most proper time for appointing and hearing tasks; the best books for assisting their children to understand the scriptures; and as to the most likely means of bringing their teaching to a happy practical issue.

But, seeing that it is so plainly the duty of parents to make known the scriptures to their children, how lamentable is the conduct, and awful the state, of vast multitudes of parents, professing the religion of Christ, who pay little or no regard to this part of practical christianity. It is, however, sometimes otherwise; and christian parents, deeply impressed with a conviction of their awful responsibility, and of the value of their own immortal souls, and of those of their children, make it their daily study to teach them the fear of the Lord.—In such cases, the good done baffles all calculation! The child is immediately and greatly benefited—the principles of piety in the minds of the parents are strengthened—a happy and endearing union of heart is formed and increased between parents and children—and should one child, out of many, go astray after such tuition, it is hoped, that his early thoughts and impressions will return and revive; and, when in a far country, he may not only remember the plenty of bread in his father's house, but also the salutary instructions received in his youth, from both his father and his mother. At all events, let parents faithfully and diligently act their part. Let them attend to the voice which says, *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Were the minds of parents in general properly alive to this most important subject, they would see and feel

the propriety of occasional meetings of the children, who live near each other, for the purposes of mutual excitement and encouragement, and that the talents and piety of the best qualified of the neighbours should be brought into frequent, and useful exercise. And what time so proper for such a work as some part of the Lord's day? It appears from church history, that something like this was practised in the primitive church. And in every christian society, at all alive to the magnificent realities of eternity, (and without this no society deserves the name of christian,) the religious instruction of the young has always been regarded as a matter the most momentous.

While so many, whose natural and imperious duty requires them to shew their children the good, and the right way, are living in the total neglect of their children, and, of course, of their own salvation, it is matter of sincere gratulation, that so many are found; who are not only willing, but anxious to shew all the children they can the path of life; making no account either of labour or money, but thinking themselves amply rewarded, if they only see their pupils, as they grow up, *fear God, and work righteousness.*

How abundant the visible good which has been already done by Sabbath Schools in these lands? What numbers have been rescued, and raised, from a state of ignorance and vice, the most degrading and perilous, to fill respectable and useful situations on earth, and to *shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father above?* And who, acquainted with the religious history of Great Britain for the last fifteen or twenty years, does not know that the mighty impulse given to religious feeling in this country, which has so abundantly evidenced and exerted itself in the formation and support of Bible, Missionary, and Tract Societies, is attributable, under

God, to the establishment and support of Sabbath Schools? And who can tell how much more good may yet be produced by them, were the attention of both teachers and scholars almost exclusively fixed upon the holy scriptures? There are many books of unexceptionable tendency, and the number is almost constantly increasing, which may be very safely, and advantageously used in Sabbath schools; especially books containing short addresses, or well authenticated and instructive anecdotes of a pious tendency. Of this latter description, I cannot help mentioning an excellent book, called "Juvenile Anecdotes," lately published by the Rev. JOHN BRUCE, in the Isle of Wight. Who can tell the benefit which would accrue from one of the teachers in each Sunday school reading one or two of these anecdotes, at each meeting of the school? But although we may find many good books for occasional use, or to give the children as premiums, yet the Bible, that Book of Books, is that which, above all others, should be made known to children. In doing this, it is unnecessary, in Scotland, to teach reading on the Lord's day. What a fine opportunity then have the teachers in this country, of spending the school hours, in communicating the knowledge of God's holy word? The best method, I think, of teaching in these schools, is to give the young children, to commit to memory, portions of the most plain and striking parts of scripture, and to require the older scholars to bring appropriate passages in proof of the subject given out on the preceding Sabbath. When I first heard of this method, which was in Glasgow, it excited a smile! I thought it was a fruitless attempt to turn children into men. A few years observation has convinced me that the method is truly excellent—that the children are very capable of being so instructed, and that many of them are by this means acquiring a degree of knowledge of the scriptures, far beyond that of any children, not taught upon the same plan.

It is very desirable, that all the teachers in the Sabbath schools should be not only persons of unexceptionable moral character, but of genuine religion; and in order to keep the sacred flame alive, they should be at liberty to attend the public worship of God at least twice on each Sabbath.

This almost incomparable institution is capable of an extension far beyond its present limits. The attention of Missionaries cannot be too early, or too zealously directed to this object; and although much has been done in Great Britain and Ireland, much more remains to be done. In short, every pious minister, and every converted man, of any information, should endeavour to increase the number, prosperity, and usefulness of Sabbath schools.

The necessity of furnishing Sabbath school teachers with some such help as that which is here offered to their notice, has appeared obvious to many. Hence we have witnessed the publication of several excellent compendiums of christian truth, with the proofs accompanying them. But it is humbly submitted, that although these may be very useful, yet, if the children are only required to look out the passages ready marked, it will prevent that exercise of their judgment, which is required by the method here recommended.

The subjects contained in this Humble Assistant are so plain as to be easily understood, and remembered, by the children; and so important, as to deserve their utmost attention, and also that of their parents, who may occasionally be applied to by their children for assistance in the selection of appropriate proofs.

Parents, and masters, also, who instruct their own children and servants, may find a help of this kind, not

unworthy of their attention. And may it please the Lord, the fountain of all wisdom and goodness, to bless this and every other attempt for the benefit of the young. To Him be glory for ever.—Amen.

SUBJECTS TO PROVE FROM SCRIPTURE.

First, THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

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| 1. That God is Almighty. | 7. Every where present. |
| 2. That He is Wise. | 8. Knows every thing. |
| 3. Holy. | 9. Hates sin. |
| 4. Just. | 10. Loves righteousness. |
| 5. True. | 11. That He made all things,
and, in particular, Man. |
| 6. Good. | 12. Preserves and feeds all. |

Secondly, SINFUL PRACTICES.

Prove from Scripture the sin, and evil consequences, of the following practices.

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| 1. Falsehood. | 8. Drunkenness. |
| 2. Swearing. | 9. Impure conversation. |
| 3. Cursing. | 10. Quarrelling. |
| 4. Stealing. | 11. Tale-bearing, or evil
speaking. |
| 5. Sabbath-breaking. | 12. Conformity to the world. |
| 6. Disobedience to Parents. | 13. Cruelty to Animals. |
| 7. Ditto to Governors and Rulers. | |

Thirdly, SINFUL DISPOSITIONS.

Prove from Scripture the Sin and evil consequences of the following Dispositions.

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| 1. Pride. | 6. Covetousness. |
| 2. Envy. | 7. Anxious care about the
things of this world. |
| 3. Wrath or anger. | 8. Unbelief. |
| 4. Hatred. | |
| 5. Malice. | |

Fourthly, IMPORTANT DOCTRINES.

Prove from Scripture,

1. That all men are fallen, sinful, and helpless creatures.
2. That Jesus Christ came into the world to save men.
3. That He died for men.
4. That He rose again from the dead.
5. That He makes intercession for believers and sinners.
6. That the salvation of men flows from the grace, mercy, or love of God.
7. That Jesus Christ will come to judge mankind according to their works.
8. That the righteous will be for ever happy.
9. That the wicked will be for ever miserable.

Fifthly, GOSPEL BLESSINGS.

Prove from Scripture,

1. That God is willing to teach all who will apply to Him to be taught.
2. That He is willing to help all who seek His help.
3. That justification, or the forgiveness of sins, is freely offered to all who will receive it.
4. That God has promised to give a new, or clean, heart, and a right spirit.
5. That He will give support in trouble, and temptation, or deliverance from them.
6. That He gives His Holy Spirit to His people.
7. That good people have peace and joy.

Sixthly, GOSPEL DUTIES.

Prove from Scripture,

1. That it is our duty to repent of our sins.
2. To fear God.
3. To pray to Him.
4. To believe on Him.
5. To love Him.
6. To praise, or thank Him.
7. To read His Word.
8. To hear it with care.
9. To obey it.
10. To do justice to all men.
11. To be kind and good to all, especially to the poor, the afflicted, and the pious.
12. To forgive our enemies, to love them, and to do them good.
13. To honour Parents, Magistrates, and Ministers.
14. To govern our own tongues and tempers.

When the Teacher, or Parent, has gone through this list of subjects, he may find a second, or third, journey with his pupils, on the same road, both pleasant and profitable.

B O O K S

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